



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
TOURISM ADVISORY TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, September 16, 2015
Arizona State University SkySong
Global Conference Room: 201
1475 North Scottsdale Road
Scottsdale, Arizona 85257
APPROVED MINUTES**

PRESENT: John Holdsworth, Chairman
Kate Birchler (out from 10:19 to 10:55)
Andrew Chippindall
Kathy Duley (via phone from 9:10 to 9:55 and from 10:19 to 11:08)
Taryl O'Shea
Susan Potje
Fred Unger

ABSENT: Cory Baker
Richard Hayslip

STAFF: Steve Geiogamah
Susan Conklu
Gary Meyer
Mary Murphy-Bessler
Erin Perrault
Rose Rimsnider
Holli Shannon
Rachel Smetana
Brent Stockwell
Erin Walsh

GUESTS: Valerie LeBlanc, PLACES Consulting
Diane Jacobs, Holly Street Studio
Sonnie Kirtley
Duncan Webb (via Skype)

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Noting the presence of a quorum, Chair Holdsworth called the regular meeting of the Scottsdale Tourism Advisory Task Force to order at 9:06 a.m.

2. Public Comment

Sonnie Kirtley stated that during her eight years with the Scottsdale Downtown Ambassadors, the name of the Civic Center Mall was a constant problem. People associate the word, "mall," with shopping centers. It should be removed from the name to avoid confusion.

3. Approval of Minutes

TASK FORCE MEMBER POTJE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 30, 2015 SPECIAL MEETING AS PRESENTED. TASK FORCE MEMBER CHIPPINDALL SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED BY A VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). TASK FORCE MEMBERS BAKER AND HAYSLIP WERE ABSENT.

4. Election of Vice Chair

Chair Holdsworth requested that the Task Force nominate a candidate for Vice Chair to replace Matthew Wright who resigned last month.

TASK FORCE MEMBER UNGER MOVED TO NOMINATE KATE BIRCHLER AS VICE CHAIR. TASK FORCE MEMBER O'SHEA SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED BY A VOTE OF SIX (6) TO ZERO (0), WITH TASK FORCE MEMBER BIRCHLER ABSTAINING. TASK FORCE MEMBERS BAKER AND HAYSLIP WERE ABSENT.

5. Destination Event Marketing Analysis and Fundraising Feasibility Analysis

The Task Force discussed the Webb Management Services report presented at the last meeting. Task Force Member Chippindall felt that a country music festival could potentially be diluted by the success of the Country Thunder Music Festival in Florence, Arizona. On the other hand, the Cool World festival and conference has much potential and could incorporate many different elements to become a very diverse event. It makes sense to have an event like that in a hot place like Arizona. The sponsorship opportunities are extensive with all the solar and power companies here. A series of TED-like talks on sustainability and the environment could attract the attention of a global audience. It could easily accommodate an arts and culture component. Of all the ideas, this seems the most exciting, and is unlike any of the ones that have been floated before. It is a new world idea that would reflect well on Scottsdale.

Valeri LeBlanc, PLACES Consulting, said the event working group is cognizant that a festival of this size has to be fundable. Duncan Webb of Webb Management Services, agreed that the event has to be compelling enough to attract partners and funders. Ms. LeBlanc explained that the working group decided to explore a hybrid model, combining elements of both the Cool World and the Biking Festival. If the Task Force can reach a consensus on what direction to take, Webb Consulting can start working on a business model to project the event's fundraising feasibility.

Chair Holdsworth noted that the Webb report cautioned that the fundability of the Cool World festival could be challenged by its controversial subject matter. Mr. Webb clarified that it is a politically provocative theme for a festival and conference, and that organizers would have to ensure that the message is acceptable to enough people.

Vice Chair Birchler said the working group analyzed each of the ideas to see which would be authentic to the destination, be unique, and would target a wide range of demographics. The Cool World conference and its sustainability message speaks to everyone from Millennials to Boomers. The Bike Festival combines well with Cool World and complements the effort to have Scottsdale known as a very bike-friendly destination. If this festival becomes a reality, the proposed bike share program would have to come to fruition. The working group also explored the event footprint, the connectivity, and the marketing aspects.

Ms. LeBlanc said the bike sharing program faces challenges in Scottsdale because of the lack of transit nodes to help anchor the stations. While federal grants are available to implement the program, ongoing support is not provided and membership will not cover the full bill. It is estimated that bike sharing could cost as much as \$500,000 per year in Scottsdale, but no similar program has been running long enough in the Valley to be certain. Apart from this, Scottsdale does have significant biking infrastructure and bike-friendly destinations. There are many bike series in Europe that have no presence in the U.S., and Scottsdale could be their way in to this market.

Task Force Member Potje said the Cool World festival has a great potential for sponsorship. Ms. LeBlanc added that the accomplishments of Scottsdale in the environmental movement are not well known, even though they are world-class. This festival could really build on those accomplishments. Brent Stockwell said Grady Gammage, Jr. has written a book that talks about the sustainability of the Phoenix metropolitan area and challenges some of the misconceptions.

VICE CHAIR BIRCHLER MOVED TO ADVANCE THE DESTINATION EVENT MARKETING ANALYSIS AND FUNDRAISING FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS TO PHASE 2. TASK FORCE MEMBER UNGER SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED BY A VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). TASK FORCE MEMBERS BAKER AND HAYSLIP WERE ABSENT.

6. Civic Center Mall Project

Mr. Geiogamah introduced Mary Murphy-Bessler as the new Downtown Specialist.

Diane Jacobs said Holly Street Studio is working to assess the community's needs and desires related to the Civic Center Mall in downtown Scottsdale. The project is currently in the study phase, and the end product is for a conceptual design with a corresponding price tag and phasing plan. The Civic Center is arguably the center of Scottsdale, but is undeniably the center of government and a jewel of a public space. The study area includes the Civic Center proper, but also incorporates input from the neighboring areas, the downtown community, and the broader public.

Ms. Jacobs explained that the Civic Center was established in the 1960's, and has evolved to include arts and culture as well as governmental structures. The goal of the study is to create a more desirable and useful city center, including an event ready venue that will allow the destination to be competitive in attracting large scale tourism events, and reboot the Civic Center as the City's epicenter. The end product will be a Municipal Site Master Plan (MSMP), which will allow a variety of improvements to move

forward, and a conceptual design that will allow the price estimation and funding process to begin. The conceptual design will incorporate and align with recommendations from Scottsdale's Downtown Economic Development Strategic Plan and the Hospitality and Tourism Five Year Strategic Plan. It will undergo an extensive public outreach effort.

Ms. Jacobs said there are several major factors to consider when improving the Civic Center: the infrastructure, the public space, an event venue, a point of pride, and an economic catalyst. Deferred maintenance has left the Civic Center with a list of things that need replacing. The Civic Center is nearly invisible from surrounding areas. The expansion of performance and festival capabilities is what sparked the project in the first place. The design should create opportunities for public and private entities to help make Civic Center a more vibrant place. The final project should create a point of pride that people can enjoy for generations to come.

Ms. Jacobs explained the different stages of the project. It is currently in stage one, the research stage. The next stage is targeted stakeholder outreach, followed by a broader public outreach effort. The final two stages are the MSMP, which will require a series of City approvals, and the conceptual design report.

Vice Chair Birchler inquired about the timeline. Ms. Jacobs responded that it is a quick timeline designed to be completed by spring of 2016. Ms. LeBlanc suggested that the outreach effort would be a good time to collect the different narratives that people have with the Civic Center. These narratives might be useful as part of a storytelling effort. She also proposed that the community have a conversation on the environmental aspects of having a plaza with so many fountains in the desert. Ms. Jacobs agreed, noting that the study takes a holistic view and sustainability will be one of many aspects explored. Ms. LeBlanc said that she does not have a good sense of the Civic Center's shape and relation to the rest of downtown. Ms. Jacobs agreed, noting that as currently configured, the space feels like a secret, when it should not be. The walk between the ballpark and the Civic Center can be greatly improved.

7. Longwoods Visitor Report

Valeri LeBlanc, PLACES Consulting, stated that Longwoods conducted 302,000 trip analyses to develop their study of the U.S. travel market using a projectable sample. The report on Scottsdale shows that the main trip purpose for 47% of visitors is to see friends and relatives. Business leisure is 5% of the market, business is 13%, and marketable travel is 35%. Total spending is \$1.1 billion. Nine percent of the people that come on marketable trips come for touring. AZ Central is right at the center of addressing that strategy. Nine percent of visitors on marketable trips come for special events, 4% for resorts, 4% come for city trips, 4% come for golf, 4% for casinos, 2% for outdoors, and 1% for theme parks. These percentages show that Scottsdale is spending its energies in the right places.

Ms. LeBlanc reviewed Scottsdale's numbers versus the U.S. norm. Scottsdale is ahead of the average on touring, golf, and special events, but a little behind on resorts and city trips. The top states of origin for visitors are California, Arizona, Illinois, and Colorado. The top cities of origin for overnight stays are Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Chicago. About 50% of the trips are drivable. Scottsdale sees between 26% and 29% of visitors from March to June. Scottsdale trends well on longer trips than average. Scottsdale

ranks above average in the number of visitors participating in theater, art gallery, spa, and biking activities, but is behind in museums, historic places and ecotourism. There is a lot of money in day tripping, and downtown Scottsdale could take advantage of this. There are opportunities to improve in bars and nightclubs, and hiking and backpacking activities as well. Female visitors are more likely to go on day trips, whereas male visitors are more likely to stay overnight.

Rachel Sacco said that in the four years that the SCVB has been trying to drive leisure business during the holiday period, occupancy has risen by 12%, and half of the leads are for need periods. Chair Holdsworth felt that the initiatives that Scottsdale has engaged in to increase shoulder season visitation has paid dividends. Off-season bargain prices have drawn many people who decide they like what they see and are willing to return during peak periods when the prices are higher. Ms. LeBlanc said the visitor experience has improved here, and this will help generate more repeat visits.

Chair Holdsworth said the Longwoods report contained some real surprises, but overall it was the most comprehensive visitor study Scottsdale has ever done. The surprises present new opportunities. Ms. Sacco agreed, adding that the information was consistent and verifiable. The report establishes a new benchmark upon which to build.

8. Tourism Development & Marketing Strategic Plan – Year 3 Engagement

Valeri LeBlanc, PLACES Consulting, provided an update on the major items that the Task Force intends to address this year.

- **Love of Place Strategy**

Love of place stories are going out to the media. The City has put together a repository of stories that can be circulated as part of the newsletters that are sent to citizens. Interpretive signs are becoming a part of the new bike tours. The Cool World conference is an event that can tap into the overarching themes that Scottsdale is focusing on as part of love of place: close to the great and permanent forms of nature; consciously created city; the best in life; the wellspring of health; and a city in the desert, and desert in a city. The more that these ideas can be deeply embedded in the community, the better off the city will be.

- **AZ Central**

Ms. LeBlanc stated that this is a major strategy moving forward. The SCVB pursued a similar strategy 15 years ago, but when it came to finding a permanent home and funding, it fell short. The work this year will be about the business model, how it gets funded, and how to engage the community. It is an idea that continues to have a lot of support, but it needs a location. Mr. Stockwell discouraged the name AZ Central as it is already in use elsewhere. A new name should be found as soon as possible. Gary Meyer announced that staff is preparing a presentation on this item for the next meeting.

- **Downtown**

Mr. Geigamah said staff had an opportunity recently to present the Economic Feasibility Plan to City Council's Economic Development Subcommittee. The downtown working group has been collaborating with multiple city departments to move the plan forward. There are six keys areas of the scope of work:

- Analysis of current studies, data, and stakeholder perceptions
- Develop three to five growth scenarios
- Gather feedback from the public
- Study the economic feasibility of the best scenarios
- Identify the City structure that will best move this effort forward
- Create an implementation plan.

Mr. Geiogamah requested an action to recommend a request for proposals. The downtown group will be addressing critical short term-solutions as well, such as window displays, marketing efforts, and a survey of key stakeholders.

TASK FORCE MEMBER CHIPPINDALL MOVED TO RECOMMEND THAT STAFF MOVE FORWARD ON THE ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS. VICE CHAIR BIRCHLER SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED BY A VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). TASK FORCE MEMBERS BAKER AND HAYSLIP WERE ABSENT.

- Events & Happenings

Vice Chair Birchler reported that the events and happenings working group is focusing on gaining a better understanding of the feasibility of the Cool World/Bike Festival concept and its sponsorship potential. It's also important to understand how to create satellite events around Scottsdale's signature events that can be embraced by all stakeholders. How can these large events become part of Scottsdale as a whole? A third important element is identifying an agent who can proactively reach out to successful producers and bring secondary versions of famous events to Scottsdale.

- Generational Change

Task Force Member Chippindall stated that the generational change working group has been working on a new website for nearly a year and their effort is close to launch. At the next meeting of the working group, the James Agency will present some logos and branding ideas. The website will be addressing the lack of go-to places available for millennials to find information on events in Scottsdale. The theme will be to present content that shows Scottsdale as a cool place to live. Lots of quality video and written content will be needed. The challenge has been to find a way to fund the website without the City's help, but many people have been interested in contributing their time up to this point. In-kind sponsorship of events will help create more interest in the website. The site should open in October.

- World Class Biking

Susan Conklu presented updates on the downtown biking strategy. Extended conversations have been held with the Planning Department on the bike route and its stops in downtown, as well as how to make its aesthetics cohesive with the surroundings. One stop at the northeast corner of 68th Street and Indian School will feature a view of Camelback Mountain with interpretive signs to explain its human and geologic history. Another site between Marshall Way and the Soleri Bridge will afford a view of the McDowell Mountains. The route will be a two-mile casual route around downtown that will be easy to explore. Any business can apply to be part of the Friends of Bikes program by showing what they do to support cyclists. In return they will be promoted as bike friendly, and featured on the route map and the web page.

Ms. Conklu noted several recent studies showing the positive return on investment in bicycle infrastructure investment. ADOT found that about \$88 million comes to Arizona each year because of biking-related events and visitation. An Iowa study found that bicycling generated \$435 million for their state. Merchants in New York and San Francisco respectively found 49% and 40% increases in retail sales after bike lanes were installed nearby.

Ms. Conklu explained that at least two more routes are planned downtown and several more citywide. The launch of the first route is expected to be December or January. Task Force Member Unger inquired whether the 68th Street portion of the route had bike lanes. Ms. Conklu said it does not, but traffic on that road is very low and there is room to install them in the future. The route should be very comfortable for riders of all skill levels.

9. Identification of Future Agenda Items

The next scheduled meeting is December 16, 2015. Agenda items will include a presentation from Holly Street Studio. Mr. Geiogamah noted that a TATF work study session with City Council is scheduled for October 27.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

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